

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-6, 13, 15-17, and 27-31 are pending in this case. Claims 1 and 13 are amended and Claims 2 and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. As amended Claims 1 and 13 are supported by the original claims, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1, 3-5, 13, and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Ito (Japanese Patent Publication No. 07-037712). However, Claims 2 and 14 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise was indicated as including allowable subject matter if re-written in independent form. Claims 27-31 were allowed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 27-31 and the indication that Claims 2 and 14 include allowable subject matter.

Initially, it is noted that the Advisory Action of November 27, 2006 indicated that the amendment filed November 14, 2006 would not be entered. Thus, the present amendment is based on the claims as amended June 12, 2006.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Ito, that rejection is respectfully traversed.

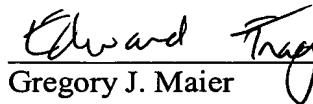
Claims 1 and 13 are amended to include the subject matter of Claims 2 and 14, respectively. As the subject matter of Claims 2 and 14 was indicated as allowable, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 13, and all claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

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Accordingly, the outstanding rejection is traversed and the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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